

## **HelpAge International Intervention for Interactive Discussion, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

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### **6<sup>th</sup> Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing UN Headquarters, New York, 2015**

#### **Follow up to resolution 69/146: Proposals and measures, best practices and lesson learned that will contribute to promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of older people**

HelpAge International welcomes the concrete proposals from Member States on the contents of a new international convention. The wide range of rights presented in these proposals reaffirms that a new convention must provide for every aspect of our lives in older age where we may be subjected to discrimination or be denied our rights.

In contrast, the vast majority of best practices and practical measures that were submitted to the Chair were confined to income security, health, violence and abuse and long term care, revealing a very narrow understanding of human rights and life in older age.

There were very few examples of measures to prohibit and eliminate ageism and all forms of discrimination, including intersectional and cumulative discrimination.

There were very few examples of measures to realise our rights in older age to justice, to effective remedies, to dignity at the end of our lives, to appropriate housing so we can age in place, to continued self-fulfilment and personal development and to autonomy and self-determination in older age.

What this illustrates is that, regardless of how rights-based or effective the practices that were presented may be, there is still a very narrow response to, and understanding of, the human rights obligations that states have to older people.

This is a major barrier to the full implementation of older people's rights. But it is not the only one. In addition, states have few incentives to act and are hardly ever held to account for their obligations in this area. Ageism and negative social constructs of older age are accepted as the norm despite being deeply harmful and dehumanising.

HelpAge firmly believes that a new international convention is the most effective way to remove these barriers to full the implementation of older people's rights. We have submitted our own concrete proposal to the Working Group on what needs to be in such a convention and this is available on the Working Group's website. It explains our rationale for the purpose and scope of the convention and suggests principles, general obligations and rights to be included. It also makes suggestions on national and international level monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

We remained convinced that without a new convention, states will continue to limit their efforts to a few areas of people's lives based on a stereotypical and increasingly obsolete conceptualization of older age.

Thank you.